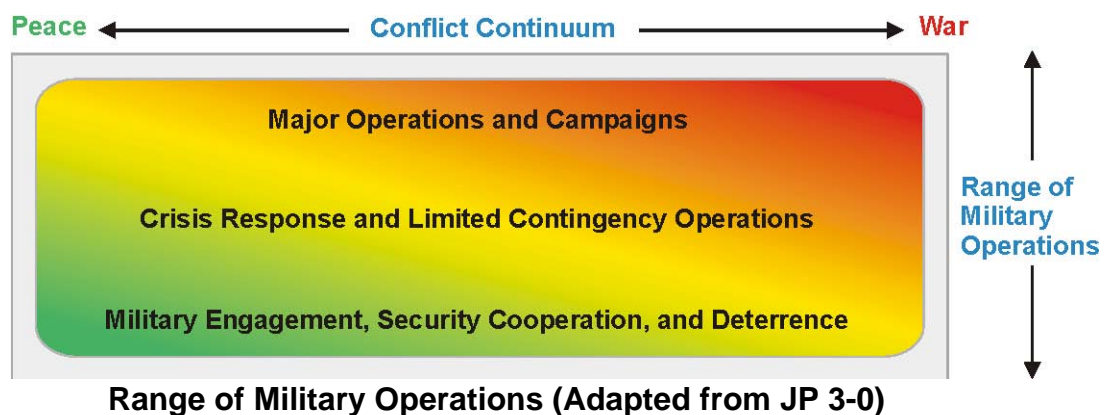


TARGETING ACROSS THE RANGE OF MILITARY OPERATIONS

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Airmen apply the targeting process across the range of military operations (see figure, Range of Military Operations). In the past, some thought of targeting only in terms of dropping bombs on targets. The same process used to identify [critical vulnerabilities](#) and recommend an appropriate capability to use against that vulnerability should be used to determine how to shape the operational environment.



Targeting activities vary in accordance with planning considerations such as the specific end state and commander's objectives, execution phase, available forces, etc. It is important for targeting personnel to recognize how the nature of the conflict influences targeting to prevent an entrenchment of capabilities to a specific conflict type. Targeting personnel, capabilities, and processes respond to higher or lower intensity conflicts at any time.

[“Airpower](#) is more than dropping bombs, strafing targets, firing missiles, providing precision navigation and timing, or protecting or attacking networks. It is also a way of influencing world situations in ways that support national objectives.”¹¹ For example, when and where to apply airdrop operations, whether for humanitarian relief or troop re-supply, requires the same targeting principles to deliver an aerial solution to the point of influence. All operations focus on affecting the perceptions and behaviors of leaders, groups or entire populations—to influence them. In some sense, all strategies, even

¹¹ [Volume 1, Basic Doctrine](#)

those involving pure attrition of enemy military forces, are thus “influence operations,” in that all seek to somehow modify or otherwise affect the behavior of actors in the operational environment.

Airmen should seek to understand how to influence the behaviors of adversaries and should focus on shaping and deterring combat operations. This includes considerations for what targets are vulnerable and susceptible to influence, what capabilities can be applied to achieve the desired results and how to assess the results once those capabilities have been applied. The targeting cycle should be used in all phases of an operation.
